

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

Some observations of Geotrupidae (Coleoptera: Scarabaeoidea) in Devon.—In March 1994, while searching a standing rotten beech trunk, the remains of what appeared to be a species of *Geotrupes* were found. These remains consisted of legs, elytra and various other highly sclerotized body segments. They were found 1.4 m above the ground in a section of loose timber and peeling bark. The remains were likely to be *Geotrupes stercorosus* (Scriba) as this is the only species of *Geotrupes* found in that particular mature oak and beech woodland. In April 1994 further *Geotrupes* remains were found under the peeling bark of an oak trunk in another ancient oak and beech woodland. These remains were not identified to species. In April 1995 searching deadwood revealed the remains of a specimen of *G. stercorosus* under the loose bark of a fallen bough of oak. These remains were found 0.8 m above the ground. Again the remains consisted of heavily sclerotized body segments. The habitat was again mature beech and oak woodland. These three instances provided only circumstantial evidence of climbing in *Geotrupidae*. However in October 1995 a female *Typhaeus typhoeus* (L.) was observed climbing easily up a moss-covered beech trunk. This individual had reached a height of 1.2 m above the ground. Following this observation it is not inconceivable that *G. stercorosus* as well as the other species of *Geotrupes* climb up suitable vertical surfaces. However the extent, frequency and purpose of such climbing is, as yet, unclear.

In April 1995 21 *Geotrupes spiniger* (Marsh.) were found under horse dung in grazed areas of Dartmoor, near Tavistock, Devon. Of these only one was found above ground and burrowing into the dung with no tunnel extending into the ground. Even after thorough excavation only two tunnels contained *pairs* of *G. spiniger*. The lack of pairs found in tunnels suggests a difference between these field observations and the laboratory observations of Kuhne (1995). Without exception all 18 tunnels had, within the first 10 cm, a 90° to 180° change in direction. This usually consisted of a downward curve in the tunnel, almost appearing as the start of a spiral descent. Following the initial curve the tunnels continued in a relatively linear descent. Kuhne (1995), describes the male and female *G. spiniger* both excavating the tunnel and horizontal brood chamber but does not refer to the initial spiral descent as found here. The tunnels did not exceed 30 cm in length, the more normal length being 40 to 60 cm (Shirt, 1991). This may have been due to the thin soil layer over solid rock, the soil rarely exceeded 25 cm depth at the sites visited. Similarly, tunnels of *T. typhoeus* did not exceed 30 cm in length. *T. typhoeus* usually produces longer tunnels of 1 m to 1.5 m (Jessop, 1986; Shirt, 1991). In some instances *T. typhoeus* males were found at the entrance to the tunnels, while the females remained in the depths of the tunnel. In one instance a male was found excavating a second (3 cm when found) burrow under horse dung while a female remained in the longer tunnel some 15 cm distant.

G. spiniger was relatively common in April although Shirt (1991) classes it as a late summer and autumn species while Jessop (1986) notes its occurrence as mostly July to October. During the period 1994 to 1995 *G. spiniger* was the predominant geotrupid in unimproved open pasture whilst *G. stercorosus* was predominant in ancient woodlands. Only very infrequently would a *G. spiniger* individual be found in woodland. *T. typhoeus* was found in low numbers in both ancient woodland and unimproved open pasture.—C. R. TURNER, 19 Pew Tor Close, Tavistock, Devon PL19 9JQ.

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Editorial note.—That scarabaeids sometimes occur under bark is borne out by my own observations. On 27.xii.1984, I found a specimen of *Trox scaber* (L.) together with several specimens of *Aphodius sphaelatus* (Panz.) and *A. granarius* (L.) under the wet fungoid bark of a large dead standing oak between Lurgashall and Petworth, West Sussex. RICHARD A. JONES.

Nomenclatural changes to some British Tortricidae (Microlepidoptera).—In the recently published *Checklist of the Lepidoptera of Australia* (Nielsen *et al.*, 1996) the genus *Piercea* Filipjev, 1940, is newly synonymized with *Gynnidomorpha* Turner, 1916. The generic combinations of five British species are affected in consequence, and these are listed below together with their code numbers as given in the most recent list of British Lepidoptera (Emmet, 1992).

- 927 *Gynnidomorpha minimana* (Caradja)
 928 *G. permixtana* ([D. & S.])
 929 *G. vectisana* (H. & W.)
 930 *G. alimana* (Rag.)
 931 *G. luridana* (Gregs.)

It should also be noted that Falkovitsh (1962) published a new monobasic genus *Piniphila* with type-species *Tortrix (Sericoris) decrepitana* H.-S., 1851, which is, however, a junior synonym of *Tortrix bifasciana* Haworth, 1811. Bradley *et al.* (1979) apparently overlooked Falkovitsh's publication and included *bifasciana* in the "dustbin" genus *Olethreutes*, and this treatment was followed by Emmet (1992). However, Razowski (1983) treated *Piniphila* as a good genus (and included *bifasciana* as a senior synonym of *decrepitana*) and gave morphological characters distinguishing it from *Olethreutes*. The entry for *bifasciana* in Emmet (1992) should therefore be amended as below.

- 1079 *Piniphila bifasciana* (Haw.)

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